

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/WE:WPKELLY:MJK

APPROVED BY EUR/WE - MR. ROWELL

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TO AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:

SUBJECT: FIRESTONE PORTUGUESA, S.A.R.L.

1. FOLLOWING MESSAGE RECEIVED BY THE PORTUGUESE DESK
IS REPEATED TO YOU FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND COMMENT.

2. "MR. WILLIAM P. KELLY, COUNTRY OFFICE FOR PORTUGAL.
BEGIN TEXT: THE FIRESTONE TIRE AND RUBBER COMPANY S.A.R.L.
THE PORTUGAL COMPANY WAS INCORPORATED IN 1958 AND HAS BEEN
OPERATED AS A FIRESTONE SUBSIDIARY SINCE THAT DATE.
YOUR OFFICE HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN SUPPLIED WITH BACKGROUND
INFORMATION CONCERNING OUR PORTUGUESE OPERATION BY MR.
KIBALL C. FIRESTONE OF OUR WASHINGTON OFFICE. ON JULY
16, 1975 AT 4:00 PM OUR MANAGING DIRECTOR, MR. C.J.
BALMASEDA, AND OUR COMPTROLLER, MR. R.G. THOMSON, BOTH
UNITED STATES CITIZENS, WERE LOCKED INSIDE OUR FACTORY
COMPOUND AGAINST THEIR WILL FOR A PERIOD OF TWELVE HOURS
AFTER WHICH THEY WERE ABLE TO ESCAPE OVER A BACK FENSE.
THEIR DETAINMENT WAS FORCED ON THEM BY THE UNION COMMISSION
WHO ALLEDGEDLY WERE REPRESENTING OUR PLANT UNION WORK FORCE.
A UNION CONTRACT BETWEEN FIRESTONE PORTUGUESA SARL AND THE
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UNION WAS FINALIZED ONLY ON JULY 1, 1975, THE TERMS OF THIS

CONTRACT WERE CONSIDERED EXCESSIVE AND A PROTEST WAS FILED WITH THE MINISTER OF LABOR. THE MINISTER OF LABOR UPHELD THE UNION DEMANDS AND FIRESTONE PORTUGUESE IN TURN HAS ACCEPTED THE NEGOTIATED PACKAGE. THE LOCK IN OF MESSRS. BALMADEA AND THOMSON WAS AN ATTEMPT TO FORCE MANAGEMENT TO GRANT FURTHER CONTRACT CONCESSIONS BEYOND THOSE RECENTLY CONCLUDED.

THIS IS NOT THE FIRST INCIDENT OF FORCED DETAINMENT OF OUR MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL. ON APRIL 7, 1975, DURING CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS, MR. R.G. THOMSON, MR. MW BRUNSON AND MR. R.J. RONEY ALL UNITED STATES CITIZENS, WERE LOCKED IN OUR FACTORY.

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE FIRESTONE TIRE AND RUBBER COMPANY IS EXTREMELY CONCERNED FOR THE SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF ALL OUR EMPLOYEES, AND WE REQUEST A FORMAL PROTEST BE FILED WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF PORTUGAL CONCERNING THE ABOVE DESCRIBED INCIDENTS AFFECTING U.S. CITIZENS. WE REQUEST ADEQUATE PROTECTION OF PEOPLE AND PROPERTY AND GUARANTEES OF MANAGEMENT'S RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW." END OF TEXT. SIGNED F.A.LEPAGE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT THE FIRESTONE TIRE & RUBBER CO. KISSINGER

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